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## **Qualities of an enthusiast and pedagogically creative teacher. Similarities and differences**

**Właściwości pasjonaty i twórczego pedagogicznie nauczyciela. Podobieństwa i różnice**

**Abstract:** The main purpose of this text is to show that professional passion is closely related to the pedagogical work of a teacher. Therefore, in the first place, the basic terms were specified, i.e. passion and professional passion, and the dualistic model of passion was studied. Subsequently, the second category, i.e. creativity, as well as the concept of pedagogical creativity with its stages are presented. As a result, a number of properties that are characteristic both of teachers' professional passion and their pedagogical creativity are identified.

Against this theoretical background, the author emphasises that passions must be revealed through self-reflection and self-analysis, as every person, without always being aware of it, possesses creative qualities to a varying extent, so the same environment may develop them in some people or may not develop them in others. Also, not all teachers are aware of their creative activities, so they just fail to develop them. In this context, some common features of professional passion and pedagogical creativity are indicated in the paper. Passionate teachers, as well as pedagogically creative teachers, are sometimes "explorers" and sometimes "specialists", and as such, they can be partners for children, as well as authorities who in some situations display their personality and who in other situations make use of their professional

skills. This way, they can be sometimes free and sometimes they may consciously give up their autonomy for the sake of higher values.

**Keywords:** passion, creativity, teacher, pedeutology.

### **Introduction**

The teaching profession is perceived in various ways in social discussions. Superiors will perceive it differently from parents, pupils or teachers themselves. More and more often, the longing for the so-called “passionate teachers” is expressed. This category of teachers have found themselves today amidst various tensions and challenges, in the face of which they are expected to be enthusiastic, reflective, autonomous, innovative, and even pedagogically creative. However, the growing complexity and dynamics of professional life may be mitigated by pedagogically creative teachers for whom work is a professional passion. Such pedagogical creativity is possible because everyone performs ordinary intellectual operations which are creative by nature, making both their recipients as well as their creators happy. It is assumed that creative teachers work with passion, focusing on their pupils’ development and achieving higher teaching effects than other teachers (Schulz, 1994).

For these reasons, the main purpose of this text is to present the characteristics of an enthusiastic teacher, along with drawing attention to his relationship with the features of pedagogical creativity. Therefore, we focus here on the essential qualities of a passionate and pedagogically creative teacher, wanting to show the similarities and differences. At the same time, we assume that there are many common features for them. Therefore, first of all, I wish to indicate the essence of passion and professional passion, followed by their properties, which also feature in teachers’ pedagogical creativity.

### **The essence of passion and professional passion**

The learned profession, together with its associated roles, constitute basic elements differentiating the social structure and shaping individuals’ social position and prestige (Słomczyński and Domański, 1998). Because the representatives of different professions have different personal characteristics, personalities or views as well as play different social roles (Szacka, 2003), the ensuing diversification of cultures between professional and social groups may occur through joint performance of professional work as well as through the recognition of common social positions.

Strongly inspired by the French language, the term *passion* was introduced into the Polish dictionary in the 18th century. It meant great dedication to a given activity or object. Its importance and popularity increased with the implementation of A. Maslow's needs theory (2006), in which he stated that the key role in proper human development, including professional development, is played by the need for self-actualisation, satisfied by striving for self-fulfillment in accordance with individual predispositions (Robinson, 2015, p. 29). Passion should be understood as a devotion, a very strong interest in certain objects and matters, acquired by people in the course of their development. Passions are therefore closely related to people who by devoting themselves to their passions feel satisfaction and fulfillment, thanks to which their activity can be considered the quintessence of a professional practitioner (Robinson, 2015, p. 11).

According to the *dualistic passion model* of Robert Vallerand et al. (2003), passion is treated as a strong tendency of a subject to perform activities that he or she likes and considers important when investing his or her time and energy to it. It may take on a harmonious or an obsessive dimension, which is determined by the process of the internalisation of a given activity (autonomous or instrumental) (Ryan and Deci, 2000). The ideal result of the internalisation process does not only act in accordance with specific principles, but is also a full identification with them when treating them as one's own (Ryan and Deci, 2000). Such internalisation is facilitated by the situational context, which simultaneously satisfies three basic psychological needs, i.e. autonomy, belonging and competence, all of which ultimately lead to self-actualisation.

*Harmonious passion* results from autonomous internalisation of an activity, during which individuals voluntarily accept social principles, applicable rules, values and goals. They assimilate them of their own free will as elements of their identity, considering them personal and important. People with a harmonious passion like and highly value the activity in which they engage and do not experience conflict in other spheres of their lives, e.g. family, free time, work. They derive pleasure from engaging in their passion, feeling a sense of fulfillment.

If a person is unable to satisfy basic psychological needs, these rules are only partially internalised or remain outside the identity, which is an indicator of an *obsessive passion* (Vallerand, Blanchard, Mageau, Koestner, Ratlle, Léonard and Marsolais 2003). The process of engaging in an obsessive passion results from uncontrolled influence of intra- and/or interpersonal factors, e.g. self-esteem, the need for social acceptance or emotions resulting

from involvement in the activity (Vallerand et al., 2003). People with an obsessive passion, similarly to those with a harmonious passion, love their chosen activity, with the difference that their involvement causes conflict with other spheres of their lives. Also, engaging in this activity constitutes the only source of their self-esteem (Lafrenière, Belangér, Sedikides and Vallerand, 2011).

In order to say that somebody has a passion, they must meet the following criteria: they like (love) it, devote time to it, consider it important, define their passion and recognise it as part of themselves (Vallerand, 2015). The passion process involves three stages: the selection of an interesting activity, the object of action, the personal evaluation of the activity, and the internalization of the passionate activity as an element of human identity (Vallerand, 2015).

Passions attract special interest (Przybysz, 2009, p. 56). They trigger the need for full involvement in their implementation (Wojciechowska, 2011, p. 93), at the same time encouraging constant development. They rest hidden in people from the day they are born, so it is only a matter of time and will to discover and release them (Robinson, 2015, p. 58). Unfortunately, because each of us is different, there is no clear theory regarding diagnosing and releasing human passions. People's passions differ from each other and they are obvious identifiers of a given person (Robinson, 2015, p. 25).

Finding your passion should be viewed as a mission to find our own "I", which is a two-way process. First, self-reflection must be carried out in order to reach the sources of inner potential and interpret it. Therefore, we focus on the sphere of individual predispositions, for which it is important to understand ourselves, our predispositions and talents (Robinson, 2015, p. 12). Subsequently, we need to go back to assess the possibility of using our passion in the environment in which we operate (Robinson, 2015, p. 2). SWOT analysis can be used for this purpose, consisting in the identification and analysis of strengths and weaknesses, as well as of opportunities and threats arising from the environment (Bielski, 2006, p. 148, 152).

For the process of discovering our passions to proceed properly, it is necessary to mute the noise, i.e. external elements that disturb the process of identification with our passion, e.g. television, the Internet, telephone, but also people who disturb our quality time with ourselves (Robinson, 2015, p. 31). In this process, it is important to become aware of the performed roles (e.g. father, son, husband, employee), because the accompanying norms and behavioural patterns direct us to certain characteristic procedures. Awareness of similarities and differences in their implementation constitutes a basis for

achieving a state of harmony, which then is a springboard for finding our true self (Przybysz, 2009, p. 44).

The process of discovering our passions can be enriched by learning the opinions of external people. However, it should be noted that these opinions may become a barrier to activities aimed at developing passions. People are naturally members of various social groups (family, school, professional, social, etc.), therefore they are influenced by the roles they perform as well as by other people, in whose opinion certain activities may be considered inappropriate due to age, duties, role or gender (Robinson, 2015, p. 34). This way, other people's views may lead to resignation.

Once the goal of self-reflection and inner exploration is achieved, we should consider the advantages of our passion. The main advantage is our ability to derive satisfaction on many levels (Przybysz, 2009, p. 74). The time devoted to pursuing a passion makes it possible for us to isolate ourselves from intrusive external stimuli, thus maintaining internal harmony and homeostasis with our environment (Covey, 2014, p. 15). This way, they affect our well-being and self-esteem. When indulging in our passion, we can focus on our chosen subject and make it a time that is solely devoted to it. This influences the growth of our self-confidence, well-being and how we are perceived by others (Maslow, 2006, p. 59).

Pursuing a passion can be nested in situations connected to our professional activity, which is reflected in Confucius's "choose a job you love, and you will never have to work even a day in your life" (Piątkowski, 2015, p. 35). In order to discover our passion, we must devote ourselves completely to a chosen activity and find what lies hidden deep within us, in our predispositions. Discovering it brings an increase in our self-esteem and self-confidence, as well as better employment, universal respect and authority. In the modern era of globalisation and computerisation, it is easy to lose professional passion and the meaning of life (Keith, 2013, p. 6). It is detrimental, because people who devote themselves to their passions feel more motivated to act and develop their skills. Also positive emotions, such as amazement, surprise, surprise, fascination characterize passion and the creative process (Tokarz, 2005).

The teaching profession is associated with enormous responsibility, the need for commitment to work, empathy and patience. Teachers are supposed to act as guides, authorities, but also as friends. Therefore, they are people who convey knowledge, skills and values that significantly influence their pupils, their future education, and even their professional future. Teachers who perform their profession with passion, devote themselves to their pupils,

approach new challenges with enthusiasm and are aware of their role. Since the very beginning, the teaching profession has been treated as a kind of vocation and teachers' role has been one of the most important social and pedagogical roles. Therefore, passion in the teaching profession is essential, without which educators cannot fully devote themselves to their work.

When focusing on the process of education, on pupils' failures and successes, as well as when interacting with parents, teachers face many challenges and responsibilities. They must also be able to find their way in the era of globalisation and technology. Regardless of their experience, they must meet the contemporary challenges in which their pupils are immersed. Such situations are associated with enormous stress and pressure, often with a feeling of helplessness, which then affects work efficiency.

It is their passion and their inner need to work with children that enables them to efficiently and authentically perform their profession as a mission. This results from the fact that enthusiasts think not only about their failures, but also have a strong internal motivation to consciously act for the benefit of their pupils, for whom they are often role models and authorities. This may indicate that in order to fully devote ourselves to work, we must simply love it and feel called to it.

Many people believe that the teaching profession is something you can simply adapt to, get used to and practice. However, there are professions, such as doctor, teacher, psychologist, etc., for which passion and love are necessary to perform them well, with great commitment and empathy towards others. The profession of a teacher requires passion, for which professional competences, knowledge, working atmosphere, communication, empathy, joy, implementation of the teaching and educational process, honesty, integrity, values and responsibility play an important role, all of which may be directed towards pupils, parents and colleagues. All of these are also features that favour teachers' pedagogical creativity. Some psychologists analyze passion in the context of creativity (Goldberg, 1986).

### **The nature, source and own concept of teachers' pedagogical creativity**

Despite its widespread use in everyday and scientific language, the concept of creativity is difficult to define, because: 1) social sciences took it from everyday language; 2) it reflects centuries-old traditions of European culture, 3) researchers took into account one aspect of creativity in their explorations, ignoring others (e.g. they only studied the creative process or creative work); 4) various theoretical reflections were adopted in the study of creativity, i.e. anthropological, psychological, sociological, etc.

Nowadays, four dimensions are taken into account when examining creativity. The first are personality traits treated as an ability to produce creative work, which, according to the elitist approach, occurs in outstanding people who produce work of high value, novelty and originality, or, according to the egalitarian approach, occur in every person. Creative processes, carried out consciously in the course of solving problems at a specific time through undefined intellectual operations with self-transcendence, constitute the second dimension of creativity. It is seen as interaction between goals, actions and their effects, as repeated structures of actions, as mental processes, as long-term implementation of individual programmes consisting in building its structure, as language of communication as well as one's "I", i.e. it is a gradual increase in creative effects in the mental (ideas) and physical (effect, action) sense (Kozielecki, 2004; Nęcka, 2001; Popek, 2003). Creative work (and its properties) constitutes the third dimension of creativity, which is to meet the basic criteria of novelty, originality, effectiveness (theoretical or practical), value (cognitive, aesthetic, pragmatic and ethical) and generativity (Nęcka, 2001; Popek, 2003). Values and lifestyle, treated as a desirable, optimal state to which people aspire, improving themselves, their immediate environment, and their behaviour in a purposeful, individualised and atypical manner, constitute the last dimension (Adamowicz and Ostrowska, 2021; Strzałecki, 2004).

Therefore, the objective dimension of creativity includes: work, time and field of knowledge, whereas its subjective dimension includes: individuals as creators, their language, thinking and creative processes, as well as their creative behaviour and attitudes (Magda-Adamowicz, 2015; Popek, 2003). Creativity is revealed and developed in a diverse environment, which means that the same environment stimulates creativity in some people and inhibits it in others. It is associated with empathy, joy, sincerity, honesty, reflectiveness, criticism, passion, and initiative that is necessary to solve problems (Magda-Adamowicz, 2009; Popek, 2003).

Thanks to the influence of humanistic ideology on psychology, it is now assumed that creativity is present in every individual to a varying extent and may be developed regardless of age, gender or race (Nęcka, 2001; Popek, 2003). Polish educators conducted theoretical and empirical reflections on creativity, relating it to: 1) lifestyle (Suchodolski, 1976), 2) pupils and young people (Szymański, 1987; Limont, 1996; Dobrołowicz, 2002; Szmidt, 2007;), and 3) teachers (Giza, 1998; Kabat-Szymaś, 2001; Magda-Adamowicz, 2007, 2012, 2015; Schulz, 1994).



**Table 1.** Sources and own concept of teachers' pedagogical creativity

Classification of creativity by author and year				
S. Popek (1985, 2003, 2010)	Kozielecki (1998)	R. Schulz (1994)	E. Nęcka (2001)	M. Magda-Adamowicz (2007, 2012, 2015)
Subjective	UNIVERSAL	PEDAGOGICAL CREATIVITY SYNONYMOUS TO PEDAGOGICAL WORK - shaping people, - personality formation, - education by creative action	Fluid creativity generating new ideas, elementary cognitive processes, emotional and motivational, divergent thinking process, attention, perception, imagination, conceptual knowledge	A CREATIVE EDUCATOR (this is the so-called pedagogical creativity, subjective and of a narrower scope), which includes: - meetings with pupils or - looking for improved methods, means, forms of work, teaching, educational, caring; - scope and level of theoretical knowledge
- also known as secondary, egalitarian, - occurs more often - it is discovering already existing phenomena, which the authors know nothing about. - for them the created work is new, original		PEDAGOGICAL CREATIVITY SYNONYMOUS WITH MODERN WORK - planning and implementation of new products (and services) - better satisfaction of societies' needs	CRYSTALLISED CREATIVITY - knowledge, experience and skills in a specific field - noticing problems - critical thinking, - ideational abilities - troubleshooting.	CREATIVE METHODOLOGIST (this is the so-called pedagogical creativity, subjective, of a broader scope), which includes: - effectiveness of the teaching work, - as well as innovations of various types (imitative, production, inventive, modifying) or - team-created programs copyright - invented teaching resources
Objective	Historical	PEDAGOGICAL CREATIVITY AS SYNONYMOUS WITH CULTURE-MAKING ACTIVITY IN FIELD OF EDUCATION - it's new knowledge, new behavioural patterns, new principles of organising education, - design and implementation of innovation	MATURE CREATIVITY - socially important goals, tasks and problems, - intrinsic motivation, hubristic motivation and the need for achievement - nonconformism, - resistance to social pressure - persistence - extensive knowledge in a given field, - social skills - life wisdom.	CREATIVE PROFESSIONAL (this is the so-called pedagogical creativity, objective of a narrower scope), which includes: - creative solving of educational problems, - author's textbooks establishing and running: original classes, nurseries, kindergartens, schools, - the process of pedagogical changes and individually created programs
- this is creativity of a higher order - they appear in culture first. - discovering and creating unique things, ideas, concepts of order, - completely new configurations, arising from associations between distant elements, - rare phenomenon, - considered in four categories: (product, process, creative personality and social acceptance of novel creations).		PEDAGOGICAL CREATIVITY. PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL SELF-FULFILLMENT - teachers create themselves, - develop their «I» - develop their didactic workshop.	OUTSTANDING CREATIVITY - as above - tendency to take intellectual risks, - in-depth understanding of undertaken problems. - create socially original work.	CREATIVE ENTHUSIAST (this is the so-called pedagogical creativity, objective, of a broader scope), which includes: - creative work style, - as well as professional self-fulfillment and creation of new original ideas, concepts.

Source: own study



Because thanks to the humanistic discourse stating that human beings are creative by nature, the psychology of creativity “distinguishes two types of creativity: objective and subjective” (Popek, 2003, p. 19). Therefore, I also distinguish between pedagogical creativity (Schulz, 1994) that can be either objective or subjective (Popek, 2003).

The original concept of teachers’ pedagogical creativity has its sources in the theory of interactive creativity by S. Popek (2010), in human transgression (Kozielecki, 2004), as well as in pedagogical creativity of R. Schulz (1994). Due to limitations resulting from editorial requirements, I have compressed these concepts in the table below.

As the above table shows, the level of universal creativity (J. Kozielecki, 1987) and subjective creativity (S. Popek, 2010) includes pedagogical creativity – a synonym of pedagogical and modern work (R. Schulz, 1994) and creative educator and methodologist. On the other hand, the level of objective (historical) creativity includes pedagogical creativity synonymous with culture-forming activity in the field of education and professional self-fulfillment (R. Schulz, 1994) and a creative professional and enthusiast.

Teachers’ pedagogical creativity results from their passion, heuristic thinking and includes the subject’s tendency to original and effective solutions to divergent problems of a didactic and educational nature in problematic situations, resulting in new, socially unique and original products (see: Kozielecki, 2004).

### **The relationship between professional passion and pedagogical creativity**

In order to reflect the essence of passion and pedagogical creativity, it is necessary to point out the similarities and differences between these constructs. Pedagogical creativity results from constant interest and reflection on the performed work. It can be said to be a unique motivational variable and mental state that occurs between a person and an object and is characterised by increased concentration and affective arousal (Hidi and Renninger, 2006). This results from strongly developed components: affective (positive and negative emotions accompanying involvement) and cognitive components (perception of values, tasks and knowledge, as well as processing information related to the interest), which constitute a mental representation of interest (Hidi and Renninger, 2006). It is a constant disposition to repeatedly engage over a given individual, situation or content over a long period of time. A teacher can feel effort and fatigue while creating. However, the effect obtained leads to satisfaction and relaxation. Among the positive

emotions associated with the creative process, apart from amazement, shock and admiration, Aleksandra Tokarz (1991; 2005) also distinguishes passion.

Both in the case of passion and pedagogical creativity, teachers like the activity in which they engage, devote time to and consider important. Pedagogical passion and creativity denote a constant disposition to engagement.

In pedagogical creativity, engaging in activities that provide satisfaction with basic psychological needs, such as autonomy, relationships and competences, plays an important role. Passion is an example of an activity that meets these needs, and its content may also be dependent on the influence of professional environment. Passion may also be a predictor of the choice of a professional path or the area of pedagogical creativity. It can be said that passion and its content can be considered an adaptation to the development and implementation of tasks.

Creativity includes the following features: spontaneity, unpredictability, flexibility, heuristics, nonconformity, individuality, reflectivity, criticism, communication, empathy, joy, sincerity, honesty, passion and professionalism. Performing one's duties diligently and with dedication may result in the emergence of creativity (Osho, 2009, p. 135). Tasks, even the most mundane, can involve creative elements. However, immersing ourselves in standard solutions may inhibit creative attitudes (Bennewicz, 2014, p. 194). A person's creative activities support their subjective well-being and are related to life satisfaction (Modrzejewska-Świgulska, 2013; Szmidt, 2013). Passion is also associated with positive feelings and an increase in mental well-being and more efficient performance (Vallerand, 2015).

Passion and pedagogical creativity can occur independently, although they are often closely related. An important fact is that the relationship between them is two-sided. Teachers' pedagogical creativity can influence their passion, directing them to further exploration. It may also be the other way around, i.e. pedagogical creativity may lead to the emergence of professional passion. Teachers' professional passion and pedagogical creativity lead to professional self-fulfillment. It should also be mentioned that every person has an open door to creativity, as it is not reserved only for great minds in the field of broadly understood art.

Analyzing the issue of emotions and their importance for the creative process, A. Tokarz distinguishes positive emotions related to it: amazement, surprise, surprise, fascination and passion. Because "cognitive emotions have a heuristic, evaluative, energizing, protective function, i.e. they act procreatively. Their mechanism is self-stimulation and growth properties" (Tokarz, 1991, p. 106; 2005, p. 77). It is positive emotions that stimulate

internal motivation, which leads the teacher to professional passion (Deci, Ryan, 1985), which is the source of pedagogical creativity.

However, finding your passion is a challenge and a mission that can take many years. This is due to the multitude of factors that make it difficult, which include: unfavourable environment, stereotypes, lack of time, external stimuli, multitude of roles, etc. Passion, as well as pedagogical creativity, constitute a culmination of the need for self-fulfillment. They are inextricably linked to creativity, which is one of the basic determinants of pursuing passion. Creativity can be identified with a child's imagination, which, if unnurtured and unused, loses its original vivid colours and begins to be limited by rational and logical boundaries. On the other hand, developing it can provide tangible benefits, make it possible to go beyond the norm and give us courage to continue with our passion. This, in turn, may become an important determinant of a great career. Passion for work results not only in greater effectiveness, but also in a sense of fulfillment.

#### **End note**

The paper presents the most important essence of professional passion, creativity and pedagogical creativity, as well as the relationship between them. When analysing the literature on passion, attention should be paid to its connection with pedagogical creativity.

It should be emphasised that the specificity of teachers' passion is determined by the uniqueness of their work, which for many reasons is highly complex, problematic and unclear. Teachers' passion is therefore context-dependent and is one of those professions that are required to respond quickly to the changes taking place around the school and within the profession itself. The area of activity of passionate teachers in education confirms our belief that they are constantly faced with new teaching and educational situations, which requires their pedagogical creativity. Their activities cannot be completely formalised and stereotyped, which requires constant exploration of the essence of teaching, as well as development of new solutions, rather than just the use of known operational algorithms.

I believe that the direction and course of education largely depend on passionate teachers, as well as on pedagogically creative teachers. At the same time, such teachers are provided with greater opportunities to choose from the proposed alternatives. Therefore, there is a feedback loop between teachers' passion and their pedagogical creativity. They are enthusiasts who create and introduce new innovations for their practice, but when necessary, they can firmly oppose them. They have the courage to create and implement

innovations and, for the sake of higher goals (e.g. the good of the child), to give them up. Creative teachers are undoubtedly passionate and inventive, as well as open to other people's ideas. Their activity requires them to constantly search, verify and develop new solutions that lead to effective teaching and educational work.

It can be said that enthusiast teachers, just like pedagogically creative teachers, are people who: 1) are sometimes "explorers" and sometimes "specialists", 2) are able to be partners for children, but at the same time authorities, 3) display their personality in some conditions and in others their professional skills, 4) are free in some situations, and are able to consciously and with understanding of higher reasons, give up their autonomy in other situations, 5) zealously devote themselves to their work.

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